

We also shouldn't forget that this was a very reckless leader. He brought the world to the brink of a nuclear confrontation in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Once the Soviet Union expired and we had access to these files, Castro was urging Khrushchev to nuke the United States. So you had Khrushchev—this crusty, Communist, Soviet leader—having to be the voice of reason in telling Castro: no, we are not going to do that, or we will end up in a thermonuclear war. If it had been up to Fidel Castro, those nuclear bombs would have been launched.

This is not a complicated legacy. This is not the George Washington of Cuba, as some have said. Washington refused power. He won a war, refused power, and could have aggrandized power for himself. He did the exact opposite. Castro wrecked Cuba and turned it into an island prison in order to amass power and wealth for himself, and that is his legacy.

The most damning evidence of his failure, of his tyranny, and of his evil nature are the tens of thousands of people who perished while fleeing Cuba and going through the Straits of Florida. Those watery graves really stand as a monument to Castro's barbarity because these were people who knew that, very likely, they were not going to be able to make it as these were shark-infested waters. Yet even the small chance of their escaping freedom and Castro's tyranny was so oppressive that they were willing to do that while knowing that they would, most likely, meet their own demise.

As we look forward, let's be honest about the nature of this regime. Let's commit to having policies that will actually put pressure on the regime and that will help those people who are still in Cuba and who are trying to fight the good fight for freedom, for free elections, and for democratic reforms.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi Shea Hecht, Hadar Hatorah Yeshiva, Brooklyn, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us be honest enough to admit our shortcomings, brilliant enough to accept flattery without arrogance, tall enough to

tower above deceit, strong enough to treasure love, brave enough to welcome criticism, compassionate enough to understand human frailties, wise enough to recognize our mistakes, humble enough to appreciate greatness, and righteous enough to be devoted to the love of God.

Almighty God, inspire the leaders in Congress to inspire all the people. Bestow Your infinite blessings upon all the citizens of this great country.

We pray for the safety of our Armed Forces and that every soldier return home safely after fulfilling Your mission.

We pray that the world be a better place for all mankind; that we rid ourselves of prejudice and hatred, poverty and addiction, greed, jealousy, and selfishness, and that all these ills are replaced with love and harmony, peace and tranquility, respect and dignity, sanctity of marriage, family and community.

May this country, the greatest country of the world, go from strength to strength.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING RABBI SHEA HECHT

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Rabbi Shea Hecht for his opening prayer. Rabbi Hecht, a Chabad Rabbi, is the chairman of the board of the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education.

Rabbi Hecht has brought together people of different faiths, races, and backgrounds in New York to promote peace through understanding. These principles hold true in New York, as they do throughout the country and right here in this body.

One thing that my time in Congress has reinforced in me is that prayer matters. The daily opening prayers here in the Chamber set the tone for my day and often help me reflect on how to be a better husband, father, and Congressman.

I join Rabbi Hecht in his pursuit for peace at home and abroad and thank him for his meaningful prayer. I certainly thank his family as well, including Rabbis Hanoch and Yitzchok, rabbis in the Hudson Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATING CHAIRMAN TOM PRICE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Tuesday morning, President-elect Donald Trump made an extraordinary cabinet selection by appointing Chairman Dr. TOM PRICE to serve as America's Secretary of Health and Human Services.

President-elect Trump announced: "Chairman PRICE, a renowned physician, has earned a reputation for being a tireless problem solver and the go-to expert on healthcare policy, making him the ideal choice to serve in this capacity. He is exceptionally qualified to shepherd our commitment to repeal and replace ObamaCare and bring affordable and accessible healthcare to every American."

I am grateful to have served alongside Chairman PRICE in the House of Representatives and I was honored to be an original cosponsor of his legislation, the Empowering Patients First Act. This is a comprehensive healthcare plan that puts Americans in control of their healthcare plans and choices, not the government.

Congratulations to Dr. TOM PRICE, his wife, State representative Betty, and their son, Robert, my former intern, on this deserved honor. I look forward to watching his success in this new role for the American people.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

PIONEERING MEDICAL RESEARCH LEGISLATION

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the 21st Century Cures Act and the hope and help it brings to those whose lives have been touched by disease or addiction.

In my western New York community, opioid overdoses doubled from 2014 to 2015, and, tragically, that number is expected to double again this year. This bill delivers funds to help States and families fight the epidemic.

This legislation also makes substantial investments in pioneering research